



Winter 2021 Visitor Guide



JD Hascup photo

Are You Prepared for Winter on the Mountain?

Winter at Mount Rainier is stunningly beautiful and offers many recreational opportunities for the prepared visitor. However, Paradise-winter operations will look different this year. There is no food service at Paradise, and the Jackson Visitor Center is closed due to COVID-19. Food and retail are available at Longmire. We ask that you do your part to protect your health and the health of others during your visit.

Winter on the mountain requires special caution for backcountry skiers, snowshoers, and campers. As you head up the mountain for a short snowshoe walk or a multi-day climb be aware of conditions and have a plan to self-rescue, if necessary. The park does not mark hazards, stabilize avalanche slopes, or designate safe routes. Proper planning and preparation can help you survive an unexpected night on the mountain.

Consider the following questions before starting on a hike or climb:

- Have you checked the weather forecast?
- Are you equipped to survive overnight if whiteout conditions prevent travel?
- Are you tuned in to avalanche hazards and snow traps that can develop over streams?
- Can you depend on your winter skills, and those of the people traveling with you?
- Do you have a hiking partner?

Your Car is Your New Warming Hut

There is no indoor space available to get out of the weather and warm up. Consider your vehicle part of your winter emergency gear for shelter and warming.

Longmire-Paradise Road Closes Nightly

The road to Paradise closes nightly at Longmire and reopens at 9:00 am, conditions permitting. Check @MountRainierNPS on Twitter for daily road updates. Plan to leave Paradise by 4:30 pm to clear the Longmire gate by its 5:00 pm closure. The uphill gate at Longmire closes at 4:00 pm. The Nisqually Road to Longmire is open 24/7, unless impacted by severe weather.

Stop at Longmire for Food and Necessities

Grab and Go meals and necessities are available at the National Park Inn. The Longmire Museum is closed. Restrooms at Longmire are open.

Practice Winter Wellness

Be respectful of others. Cover your nose and mouth when you can't maintain at least six feet from other groups or when in indoor spaces. If you feel sick, always stay home.

Build an Inclusive Outdoors

Be an active part of making the outdoors safe and welcoming for all identities and abilities.

Mount Rainier is the traditional land of the Cowlitz, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, Squaxin Island, and Yakama tribes. Indigenous traditional practices are intrinsic with the land and continue to this day.



Cellular Service

Cellular service is not available in most of the park. Cell service is available near the main parking area at Paradise.



No Pets on Trails

or Snow Leashed pets are permitted only in parking lots and along roads open to public vehicles. Walking on roads is not recommended due to hazards from snowplows.

WINTER-SPRING 2021 ALERTS!

Plan Ahead for Limited Services

The Jackson Visitor Center and the Longmire Museum are closed due to COVID-19. There is no food service at Paradise. Restrooms are available. For current information on services check locally or on the park website <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/covid-19-visitor-guide.htm>

Sledding and Paradise Snowplay Area

The Paradise snowplay area will not open until public health guidelines related to the COVID-19 are met and there is sufficient snow coverage. Sledding inside the park is not permitted in locations other than the Paradise snowplay area. More information on page 2.

Ranger-led Snowshoe Walks Canceled

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ranger-led snowshoe walks are canceled for the 2020-21 winter season.

Tire Chains Required November 1st - May 1st

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when driving in the park November 1st until May 1st. Use may be required at any time. See page 4 for more information.

Winter Recreation

Snowplay Area

The snowplay area will not open until public health guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic are met and there is sufficient snow coverage to prevent resource damage. At Mount Rainier National Park, sliding and sledding are permitted only in the designated snowplay area, located immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. The snowplay area may remain open until late March, depending on snow.

Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other area of the park is open to sliding (except skiing and snowboarding). Serious injuries and fatalities have occurred elsewhere when people have mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down steep slopes, or broken through thin snow into stream gorges.

- Access the snowplay area from the main trailhead behind the visitor center.
- Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted.
- Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.
- Take broken sleds home for disposal.

Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric such as wool or polypropylene next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer, not in jeans or T-shirts. Wear a hat, gloves, and waterproof boots. Take a warm-up break in your car.

Climbing & Backpacking

Over 10,000 people attempt to climb Mount Rainier each year. Around 70 well-skilled climbers attempt it in winter. Camping and climbing in winter are much more demanding and hazardous than in summer. The climbing fee is \$51 dollars/person 25 years and older, and \$35 dollars/person 24 years and younger, per calendar year and can be paid in advance at www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/climbing.htm.

Permits are required for all overnight stays in the wilderness and for travel above 10,000 feet and/or on glaciers. Permits are available in person at the Longmire Museum (Monday-Thursday), Longmire Wilderness Information Station (Friday-Sunday), and by self-registration on the front porch of the Paradise Ranger Station and the White River Wilderness Information Center (closed for winter). See Facility Hours on page 4.

Overnight parking at Paradise is in designated areas only. See the overnight parking map on page 4.

Guided climbs and climbing seminars available by:

- Alpine Ascents International (206) 378-1927
- International Mountain Guides (360) 569-2609
- Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (888) 892-5462

Snow Camping

Snow camping requires a permit and sufficient snow depth to prevent resource damage. Free permits are available at the Longmire Museum (Monday-Thursday), Longmire Wilderness Information Station (Friday-Sunday), Paradise Ranger Station as staffing allows, and at the winter closure of SR410. See Facility Hours on page 4. Camp in designated areas well away from buildings, marked trails, and parking lots. When you finish camping, collapse igloos and snow caves to keep others from falling in. Fires are not permitted.

The gate at Longmire to Paradise closes nightly. Snowplows routinely operate on the wrong side of the road when it is closed. Avoid parking lots and roads until morning plowing activities are complete. Before driving downhill, check with a ranger or listen to Radio 1610-AM Paradise, to be sure the road is open and that your vehicle meets the traction requirement.

Group snow camping of 13 or more is not permitted this year.

Access to 24-hour restrooms and an emergency phone are available in the upper parking lot near the Guide House. Others should use “blue bags” to remove human waste from the park and/or deposit blue bags in the special barrel provided. The blue bag barrel is located in the tunnel to the Paradise upper parking lot restroom. Do NOT throw blue bags in trash cans!

Proper food storage is required. Hang your food, garbage, and scented items or secure in approved hard-sided containers. Hard-sided containers are **required** for camping at Paradise, Reflection Lakes, Tatoosh, and Mazama Ridge. Wildlife-resistant food containers are available for loan—ask a ranger when you get your permit. Approved containers for winter camping at Paradise are five-gallon plastic buckets with tight-fitting lids, or manufactured wildlife resistant food containers.

Overnight parking is allowed in designated areas only. Do not set your parking brake; it may freeze.

Skiing, Snowshoeing, & Snowboarding

Before starting out for the day, check the weather forecast and determine the avalanche hazard. Avalanche information, a weather forecast, and winter maps that show marked trails and popular unmarked routes are available from the Longmire Museum (daily) and Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise (weekends and holidays).

In early winter or in years of low snowfall, trees and other plants are damaged by skiers and snowboarders when snow depth is not sufficient to protect vegetation. Ski and snowboard only in those areas where the snow is deep enough to cover and protect vegetation.

Snowplows Working!

Never ski, slide, or camp on plowed roadways or parking lots! Whether the road is open or closed, snowplows may be working nearby.



Winter Wildlife

The snows of winter concentrate wildlife where life is easier—where shallow snow provides easier travel and access to food. Parking areas and roadways are efficient travel corridors for deer and foxes, and deer may find the most available forage along roadways. Many visitors mistakenly think that feeding the animals helps them through the winter months. But this brings wildlife closer to roads and people, where they can be injured or killed by vehicles.

Please pick up food particles and do not leave your lunch on your bumper—a fox or a jay will find it. Feeding wildlife is illegal and you may be fined.



#RainierWinter

Share your winter experience @MountRainierNPS online!

#RainierWinter #FindYourPark
#EncuentraTuParque #MRNP #NPS

NOTICE: Marijuana is Illegal in Mount Rainier National Park

While limited recreational use of marijuana is legal in Washington State, possession of any amount of marijuana or other illegal drugs remains illegal in Mount Rainier National Park, surrounding national forests, and all federal lands.

Camping

Sleeping in vehicles outside of campgrounds is not permitted.

Accessibility

Most comfort stations, visitor centers, picnic areas, and designated campsites are accessible or accessible with help by wheelchair. Accessible lodging is available inside the park and in local communities.

An audio description and the Braille file of the park brochure available at <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/park-brochure.htm>. Braille copies of the park brochure are available at entrance stations and visitor centers.



No Drone Zone!

Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft (drone) within the boundaries of Mount Rainier National Park is prohibited.

Stay on designated trails

or hike on thick patches of snow to protect vegetation.

Wildlife

Do not feed, approach, or disturb wildlife.

Mount Rainier National Park

Acting Superintendent
Tracy Swartout

E-mail
MORAInfo@nps.gov

Park Headquarters
(360) 569-2211

Lost and Found
MORA_Lost@nps.gov

Website
www.nps.gov/mora



Winter Safety

Winter Backcountry Travel, Are You Ready?

History has shown that snow, wind, and low visibility conditions resulting from winter storms significantly increase visitor mishaps and serious accidents in the backcountry. Many winter hikers and snowshoers are not prepared for the route-finding challenges or winter weather conditions that can occur at any time. Conditions change rapidly during the day, and freezing temperatures, wet snow, and high winds can be encountered at any time during your hike. This has left many day and overnight hikers, skiers, and snowboarders exposed and suddenly thrust into life-threatening situations due to weather resulting in injuries and fatalities.

Be aware that mountain weather changes rapidly—a pleasant outing can quickly be transformed into a survival ordeal. Make sure you are aware of weather forecasts for the area, and heed any cautions or warnings. Navigation in storm conditions can be extremely difficult. If you are ascending and clouds or fog start rolling in, turn around and head back to the trailhead. If that's not possible, stop moving, dig in, and wait for better weather. Prepare for the fact that daylight hours are short in winter; you will have less time to get out to your destination and to return. Always carry a flashlight or head lamp, and extra batteries. Having proper gear (adequate boots, ice axe, the winter ten essentials, etc.) is a must.

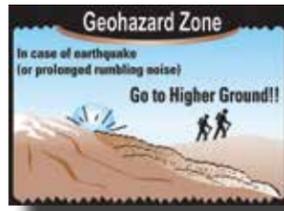
Be prepared for route-finding conditions. A GPS device with local maps pre-loaded, extra batteries, and knowledge of how to use it is the only way to navigate the Muir Snowfield in poor visibility. Even a great map, compass, and altimeter will not work in poor conditions on the snowfield. Trails may be snow-free at lower elevations but anticipate and prepare for snow at higher elevations. If you plan on retracing your route back to the trailhead note important landmarks and consider using wands on snow-covered trails. If the trail becomes difficult to follow, stop and determine where you are before

continuing. It is extremely important that you know how to use your navigation tool.

Leave information on your route with someone back home. Additionally, when traveling in the backcountry, text someone at home a picture from your turnaround location and, if possible, GPS coordinates, if cell service is available. This will be valuable, timesaving information for searchers if you encounter an emergency and are unable to return safely.

Most importantly, plan your route ahead of time, have a backup plan, and never travel alone. If at any point you begin to feel uncomfortable or unprepared, turn around, get out safely, and call it a day. Mount Rainier will be waiting for you on your next trip.

Mount Rainier: An Active Volcano



Active steam vents, periodic earth tremors, and historic eruptions provide evidence that Mount Rainier is sleeping, not dead.

Seismic monitoring stations around the mountain should provide days or weeks of advance warning of impending eruptions. Debris flows and rockfalls, however, can occur with little warning.

If you are near a river and notice a rapid rise in water level, feel a prolonged shaking of the ground, and/or hear a roaring sound coming from upvalley—often described as the sound made by a fast-moving freight train—move quickly to higher ground! A location 200 feet or more above river level should be safe.



Avalanche Aware!

Snow avalanches are common in winter and spring. The greatest danger to you is an avalanche that you trigger by skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, or climbing in avalanche terrain. Summer trails may lead through avalanche terrain.

Consider snowpack, weather, and topography in selecting your route. Ask yourself, “Will this slope slide?” and if it does, “Where will I or my partner go?” Carry an avalanche transceiver, probe, and shovel. Even small avalanches can be deadly.

Winter storms along the Muir Snowfield can produce hurricane force winds, blinding snow, and white out conditions. Avalanches occur with frightening regularity in the Paradise area. Each person in the hiking party should carry and know how to use a beacon, probe, and shovel.

Avalanche conditions challenge even the best mountaineers. Obtain daily avalanche forecasts from the Northwest Avalanche Center at <http://www.nwac.us/>. Before your hike, consult a park ranger for current conditions on the mountain.

Give advance notice of your plans to a responsible person so they can contact rangers if you fail to return. Cell phone coverage is limited inside the park.

New to a Snowy Mount Rainier? Welcome!

Mount Rainier in winter is a different experience. Ideas on how to explore this winter wonderland without hiking or snowshoeing: Walk around the scenic architecture of Longmire, drive the road to Paradise to take in the snowy views, or try your hand at winter photography.

Plan Ahead Before you head out, make sure you pack everything you need. Have the proper safety gear including extra layers, heat packs, wool or pile hat and gloves. Consider your vehicle part of your winter emergency gear for shelter and warming. Prior to driving to the park check the park webcams and weather forecasts for current conditions.

Road Rules Check your routes before you hit the road, drive to the conditions (SLOW DOWN!), and have a fully stocked emergency kit in your car. All vehicles are required to carry tire chains or AutoSocks when visiting Mount Rainier National Park. Visit @MountRainierNPS on Twitter for possible Paradise Road opening delays or closures.

The Buddy System is Your Friend Do not hike alone. Make sure someone responsible back home knows when you are starting, when you are ending, where you will be in between (approximate route), and even what you are wearing. Additionally, when traveling in the backcountry, text someone at home with a picture from your turnaround location and, if possible, GPS coordinates, if cell service is available. This will be valuable, timesaving information for searchers

if you encounter an emergency and are unable to return safely.

Don't Have the Right Gear? Don't Go Carrying the Winter 10 Essentials is as important as life or death. If you do not have what you need to survive create an adjusted adventure plan to make sure you get home safely.

It is Okay to Turn Around If you or anyone from your party feels unsafe, take a break to reevaluate, turn around, or find another activity. Make sure everyone is comfortable speaking up when they feel unsure. The mountain will always be here for you to explore.

Know the Symptoms of Hypothermia and Frostbite Pay attention to not only how you feel before you start your hike but also while you are hiking. Symptoms of hypothermia include: uncontrolled shivering, loss of coordination, clumsiness, stumbling, slurring of speech, confusion or difficulty thinking, drowsiness, shallow breathing, and a weak pulse. Frostbite symptoms include: cold prickly feeling, numbness, and skin that is hard, waxy-looking or changing colors.

Don't Get Left Out in the Cold Weather changes quickly and unexpectedly. Know when it is time to call it quits and head back to the trailhead. If it starts to get cloudy, consider returning to the trailhead earlier than intended. Plan to leave Paradise by 4:30 pm to make it to Longmire before the gate closes for the evening.

Carry the Winter 10 Essentials and know how to use them!

- Shovel (avalanche rescue, emergency shelter/dig a snow cave)
- Full Length Insulated Sleeping Pad
- Stove & Fuel (melt water)
- Heat Packs
- Goggles & Wool/Pile Hat
- Gloves (waterproof/lined)
- Avalanche Transceiver
- Avalanche Probe
- Reliable Weather & Avalanche Forecasts
- Map, Compass, & GPS (with extra batteries)

Winter Conditions Reports

Avalanche Hazard Forecasts

(206) 526-6677

<http://www.nwac.us/avalanche-forecast/current/cascade-west-south/>

Highway Pass Reports

(800) 695-7623 or dial 511

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passes/>



Winter Driving and Facility Hours

Facility Hours

Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise

The building is closed, but rangers staff an information table 10:00 am – 4:00 pm Saturday - Sunday

Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise Camp Deli & Gift Shop

Closed. Stop at the Longmire National Park Inn for grab and go meals on your way to Paradise.

Paradise Ranger Station

Wilderness camping and climbing permit self-registration.

Longmire Museum

The building is closed, but rangers are available to provide information 9:00 am – 4:30 pm daily. Wilderness permits available Monday-Thursday 9:00 am – 3:30 pm.*

Longmire Wilderness Information Center

The building is closed, but rangers are available to assist with self-registration for wilderness camping permits 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Friday-Sunday.*

* Arrive at Longmire by 3:30 pm at the latest to obtain a permit to get through the gate to Paradise before it closes at 4:00 pm.

Carbon River Ranger Station

The building is closed. Self-registration for wilderness camping permits.

National Park Inn at Longmire

Open year-round

Lodging, grab and go meals. Reservations (360) 569-2275 or mtrainierguestservices.com
Front Desk 7:00 am – 10:00 pm daily

Dining Room

Breakfast 7:00 am – 10:30 am daily

Lunch 11:30 am – 3:30 pm daily

Dinner 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm Sunday-Thursday

4:00 pm – 8:00 pm Friday-Saturday

Longmire General Store

Open year-round

Food, gifts, books, apparel

10:00 am – 5:00 pm Sunday-Thursday

8:30 am – 6:00 pm Friday-Saturday

Services Outside Mount Rainier National Park

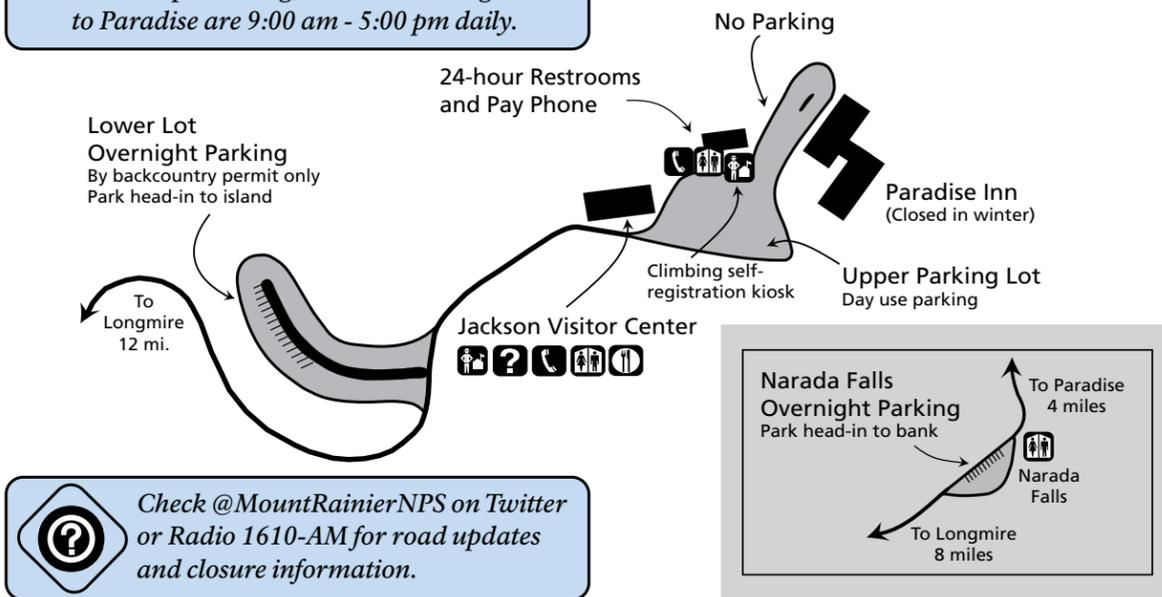
Gasoline, lodging, dining, recreation equipment rentals, and religious and other services are available in local communities.

Gas is Not Available Inside the Park

In Case of Emergency Dial 911 from any phone located inside the park.

Paradise Overnight Parking Areas

Conditions permitting, road hours Longmire to Paradise are 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily.



Check @MountRainierNPS on Twitter or Radio 1610-AM for road updates and closure information.

Winter Driving Safety

As road and weather conditions change throughout the day, traction requirements may also change. Tire chain requirement updates are posted on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MountRainierNPS. Listen to Radio 1610-AM at Paradise for updates to changing road information and requirements.

Most of Mount Rainier's roads are snowed in and closed to vehicle access during winter. The road from Nisqually Entrance to Longmire is open year-round, but may close during extreme weather.

Rangers and snowplow operators evaluate road, weather, avalanche, and staffing conditions each morning before making a decision on whether it is safe to open the gate to Paradise. *The Longmire to Paradise road hours are approximately 9:00 am - 5:00 pm daily, conditions permitting.* The road may close early or remain closed the entire day due to avalanche danger, severe weather, or with a shortage of the necessary staffing to maintain safe access. Visitors must head downhill from Paradise by 4:30 pm to clear the Longmire gate by its 5:00 pm closure. The uphill gate at Longmire closes at 4:00 pm.

All vehicles are required to carry tire chains when driving in the park in winter and spring. Use may be required at anytime. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds must carry a second set of chains and chain up whenever traction tires or chains are required. AutoSocks are allowed for passenger vehicles under 10,000 pounds as an alternative traction device.

Become A Mount Rainier Steward

Turn your passion for Mount Rainier into action that will benefit visitors today and tomorrow! Consider joining our team as a park volunteer. Your contribution of time and energy will protect the magnificent natural and cultural areas entrusted to us, and you'll go home with a sense of pride at having participated in something worthwhile. Volunteer in the park for a day, a summer, or on weekends as your schedule permits. Learn more at www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm.

Washington's National Park Fund serves as the park's official philanthropic partner. Founded by Governor Daniel Evans in 1993, the Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, accepts charitable gifts that are then given back to the park for projects focusing on these four main areas:

- Trail Maintenance and Search and Rescue
- Youth and Education Programs
- Science and Research
- Volunteerism and Stewardship

Whether you adopt a trail mile, include Mount Rainier in your will, or purchase a Washington State license plate for your vehicle, they all add up and have a major impact on this beloved place. Please consider giving back to Mount Rainier National Park through Washington's National Park Fund. Visit <http://wnpf.org/> for more information. Tax ID#: 01-0869799



Keep in Touch

Visit the park's official website nps.gov/mora and join us on social media @MountRainierNPS.



Check winter road updates on Twitter.

@MountRainierNPS

Park Partners



Washington's National Park Fund
wnpf.org



Mount Rainier National Park Volunteers
www.nps.gov/mora/getinvolved/volunteer.htm



Washington Trails Association
www.wta.org



Discover Your Northwest
www.discovernw.org



Visit Rainier
visitrainier.com



Mount Rainier National Park Associates
www.mrnpa.org



Mount Rainier Institute
www.packforest.org/mtrainierinstitute/